

ADP494
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ACTION NEA-11

INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 INR-10 EUR-00 SS-00 CIAE-00 NSCE-00
NSAE-00 PM-10 ANAE-00 SP-02 DS-01 DSE-00 SCT-02
P-02 T-01 (AS-01 DODE-00)/039 W

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P R 261000Z APR 87
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 6391
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMCONSUL PESHAWAR
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
DIA WASHDC

CONFIDENTIAL KABUL 0722

REF: 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PROP, MOPS, AF, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET REPRISALS IN NORTHERN AFGHANISTAN

REFS: (A) ISLAMABAD 08896 (NOTAL), (B) KABUL 0684 (PARA 18),
(C) KABUL 0593 (PARA 7), (D) KABUL 0464 (PARA 20)

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT)
2. SUMMARY: THE FOLLOWING IS IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS POSED BY PRESS IN ISLAMABAD (REF A) REGARDING REPORTS OF MUJAHIDIN ATTACKS INTO SOVIET TERRITORY AND SUBSEQUENT SOVIET REPRISALS. QUERIES CENTERED ON THE IDENTITY OF MUJAHIDIN ATTACKERS AND WHETHER SOVIET REPRISALS CONSTITUTED AN ATTEMPT BY THE SOVIETS TO DE-POPULATE AFGHAN TERRITORY NEAR THE SOVIET BORDER. WE HAVE LITTLE FURTHER TO OFFER REGARDING THE IDENTITY OF MUJAHIDIN UNITS INVOLVED. WE DO BELIEVE THE SOVIETS ARE ATTEMPTING TO DE-POPULATE THE BORDER REGION KUNDUZ AND TAKHAR. END SUMMARY.

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3. RELIABLE DIPLOMATIC SOURCES IN CONTACT WITH AFGHANS FROM THE NORTH TELL US THAT SOVIET REPRISAL ATTACKS AGAINST CIVILIAN AREAS IN KUNDUZ ARE CONTINUING. SOVIET FORCES REPORTEDLY ARE METHODICALLY DESTROYING VILLAGES IN THE EMAM SAHIB AREA (37°11'N 68°55'E), EMPLOYING ARTILLERY TO DESTROY VILLAGES, THEN USING THE DESTROYED VILLAGES AS FIRE BASES TO DESTROY NEIGHBORING VILLAGES. THIS OPERATION, WHICH HAS CONTINUED FOR OVER A MONTH, GOES FAR BEYOND STANDARD OF USUAL SOVIET REPRISALS BOTH IN

TERMS OF DURATION AND SCOPE.

4. SOVIET REPRISALS AT KHWAJA-I-GHAR (37°04'N 69°25'E) NEAR THE SOVIET BORDER IN TAKHAR PROVINCE ALSO APPEAR UNUSUALLY BRUTAL EVEN BY SOVIET STANDARDS: ACCORDING TO A RELIABLE AFGHAN SOURCE, SOVIET TROOPS BLOCKED ROADS TO PREVENT MUJAHIDIN (AND CIVILIANS) FROM ESCAPING INTENSE BOMBARDMENT FROM AIR AND ARTILLERY.

5. SOVIET ATTACKS IN THE AREA OF KUNDUZ (CITY) AND TALAQAN (CAPITALS OF KUNDUZ AND TAKHAR PROVINCES RESPECTIVELY, BOTH LOCATED WELL AWAY FROM THE BORDER) WHILE BRUTAL, APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN SIMPLY PUNITIVE. (SIGNIFICANTLY, IN THE TALAQAN AREA, SOVIET FORCES USED TACTICS SIMILAR TO THOSE EMPLOYED AT KHWAJA-I-GHAR: ACCORDING TO A RELIABLE DIPLOMAT, QUOTING AFGHAN SOURCES FROM THE AREA, THE SOVIETS FIRST RINGED THE TARGETTED VILLAGES WITH ARMORED VEHICLES, PRECLUDING ESCAPE BY MUJAHIDIN AND CIVILIANS.)

6. WE NOTE, MOREOVER, MUJAHIDIN SUCCESSES IN AREAS NEAR THE SOVIET BORDER RECENTLY (AT KHWAJA-I-GHAR, PARA 20, REF D) SHORTLY BEFORE THE REPORTED RAIDS INTO SOVIET TERRITORY. DRA

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INABILITY TO SECURE AREAS NEAR THE SOVIET-AFGHAN BORDER ALSO MAY HAVE LED THE SOVIETS TO TAKE MATTERS INTO THEIR OWN HANDS. FINALLY, REPORTS FROM AFGHANS AND DIPLOMATS THAT SOVIET CENTRAL ASIANS EITHER WERE ABDUCTED OR DEFECTED INTO AFGHANISTAN AT THE TIME OF THE RAIDS COULD ONLY COMPOUND SOVIET CONCERN.

7. UNUSUAL SOVIET MEDIA COVERAGE OF THESE MUJAHIDIN RAIDS AND THE SOVIET RESPONSE THEREFORE MAY BE INTENDED TO PROVIDE PROPAGANDA JUSTIFICATION FOR A DE-POPULATION CAMPAIGN AND, INTER ALIA, FOR APPARENT DIRECT INTRODUCTION OF NEW SOVIET FORCES INTO AFGHANISTAN TERRITORY.

8. AS TO THE IDENTITY OF THE GROUPS STAGING THE ATTACKS INTO SOVIET TERRITORY, WE NOTED THAT THE MARCH ATTACK WAS REPORTEDLY LED BY "GHULAM" (REF C). MORE GENERALLY, SOVIET MEDIA HAVE LAID RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MARCH AND APRIL 8 ATTACKS TO "GULBUDDIN." DIPLOMATS LOCALLY WHO ARE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NORTH PRESUME (AS DO WE) THAT MASOOD MAY ALSO BE INVOLVED. A KNOWLEDGEABLE DIPLOMAT HAS RECEIVED AN AFGHAN REPORT THAT ANOTHER MUJAHIDIN LEADER IN THE ATTACKS WAS A COMMANDER ACTIVE IN THE CHARIKAR AREA NAMED "GHAUR."

9. FOR ISLAMABAD: QUESTIONS SUCH AS THOSE POSED REF (A) ARE USEFUL TO US IN UNDERSTANDING THE DIRECTION OF PRESS INTEREST. WE WILL SEEK ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON THIS IMPORTANT STORY FOR FUTURE SITREPS THOUGH AS YOU UNDERSTAND, OUR ABILITY

TO TARGET RESOURCES TOWARD THIS REMOTE AREA IS LIMITED. REQUEST
ADDRESSEES PROTECT SOURCES IN BRIEFING ABOVE TO PRESS.

10. MOSCOW MINIMIZE CONSIDERED. EALUM

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